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The Every-Member Canvass

A THREE-ACT DRAMA
TO BE USED IN THE PREPARATION FOR SAME

BY
F. E. DAVISON

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THE WHOLE CHURCH UNDER THE WHOLE TASK

A THREE-ACT DRAMA
TO BE USED IN THE PREPARATION FOR THE
EVERY-MEMBER
CANVASS

DEDICATED
TO THE SPENCER CHRISTIAN CHURCH
WHERE IT WAS FIRST PRESENTED

By
F. E. DAVISON



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P R E F A C E

This little play was not written with any idea of publication, but was written and presented merely to awaken the church, to which the author ministers, to the larger interests of the Kingdom and to prepare the church and canvassers for the Every-Member-Canvass. Although this church had had two successful canvasses during the past two years, there seemed to be a feeling that the canvass this year would run itself without any special interest in the matter. This play, with other methods of preparation, aroused the church, and the results showed a 15 per cent. increase in the current budget and a 35 per cent. increase in missions and benevolences. After urgent requests by many of my friends and with an earnest prayer that it may solve the financial problem of numerous other churches, I am now offering the play for publication. It is not a work of art, but if properly presented it will help church members to see themselves as they really are and will put them in a happy spirit for the canvass.

F. E. D.

SUGGESTIONS

FELLOWSHIP WEEK.

The presentation of this play was a part of a "Fellowship Week" program, which was carried out preceding the Every-Member-Canvass. During this week the walls of the church were lined with posters made from pictures cut out of the various missionary magazines. Across the front of the church was a poster thirty feet long bearing the motto, "The Whole Church Under the Whole Task." At each service during the week the congregation was called upon to repeat the motto in concert. The program of the week was as follows:

Monday night: "Men's Night." A men's banquet was held at the supper hour, followed by a special address to men at the evening service.

Tuesday night: "Country People's Night." At this service the members who lived in the country were guests of honor and they all sat together in a section of reserved pews.

Wednesday night: "Church Night." The history of the church was presented and the pioneer leaders were honored.

Thursday night: "Young People's Night." All the young people of the church met and came to the church in a body, singing their songs as

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they came. The sermon of the evening was addressed to the young people.

Friday night: "Everybody's Night." This was the night that the play was presented, but the nature of the program was kept a secret and was advertised with the following slogans: "Something Doing," "A Real Surprise." Preceding the play, four three-minute addresses were made by lay members. The first presented the Home and Foreign Missions Call; the second told of the benevolent work of the church; the third described the Women's Missionary Work, and the fourth gave the challenge to larger giving for the local budget. These four speakers were instructed to waste no time with apologies, but to plunge at once into their subject matter. Each speaker was held to his (or her) allotted time.

Following these speeches, which had been preceded with hymn and prayer, another hymn was sung. The pastor then announced that an attempt would be made to represent "The Every-Member-Canvass" being made in three different kinds of homes.

Supplement to Act II.

The supplement to Act II was added to the play when presented at another church the following week. It was added at the suggestion of some of the men who made the canvass. They

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claimed that their experience had led them to feel that there was one kind of homes that was not represented in the original play. This supplement may either be used or left out without injuring the play.

Platform Arrangements.

The arrangement of the platform must depend largely upon local conditions. However, it is well to have it appear as homelike as possible. A large arm chair for father, a rocking chair for mother, a small chair for babe, a table lamp and the piano, with perhaps a few pot flowers, will all assist in creating the homelike atmosphere.

If the assistance of an electrician can be enlisted, the placing of a red light at the front of the platform in the last act will greatly help the home fireside scene. During the time "babe" is singing "Home, Sweet Home," most all the other lights should be turned off and only the red light used. "Babe" should stand where the red light will shine on her face.

The play can be presented without curtains, but it will be a great help to have some simple curtains, so that the platform can be properly arranged between the acts.

No "make-up" is necessary, and would detract from the play rather than add to it.

CHARACTERS

Mr. Jones	Mr. Lovejoy	
Mrs. Jones	Mrs. Lovejoy	
Mary Jones	Ernest Lovejoy	
Wm. Jones	Josephine Lovejoy	
Sarah Jones	Sarah Lovejoy	
Mr. Grouch	Edith Lovejoy	
Mrs. Grouch	Babe Lovejoy	
Henry Grouch	Canvassers	Mr. W
Sally Grouch		Mr. M

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ACT I—(INDIFFERENT).

CHARACTERS:

Mr. Jones.

Mrs. Jones.

Mary Jones, 17 years old.

William Jones, 12 years old.

Sarah Jones, 7 years old.

Canvassers, Mr. W—, Mr. M—.

(Mr. Jones seated at the table reading Sunday paper; Mrs. Jones knitting; Mary reading a book; William trying to fix his air gun, and Sarah playing with her dolls.

Mrs. Jones—James, I wish you would read the paper to *me*. I am so busy knitting that I haven't time to read anything.

William (going over to father's chair)—Say, dad, this gun you bought me the other day, when we drove the car over to B—, is all out of fix. I can't get this trigger to work. How can I fix it, dad?

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Sarah (going over to father's chair)—Papa, see my dolly's new dress. Isn't it pretty? Do you think it looks better in blue or pink?

Mr. Jones (irritated)—I wish you people would quit bothering me when I am trying to read. It seems that I can't sit down to look at the paper without everybody bothering me.

Mrs. Jones—Now, father, you know you read that paper all morning, and just as soon as you swallowed your dinner you put your nose back in that old paper. I think you had better gone to church this morning instead of reading the paper all day.

Mr. Jones—You said before you got up this morning that you were not going to church.

Mrs. Jones—Well, I was tired and had a headache, and I had to get William and Sarah ready for Sunday School, and a thousand and one things to do.

Mr. Jones—Was there anything extra going on at church this morning? I saw a big crowd going when I came back from the mail.

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Mrs. Jones—I don't know. Some of the neighbors went every night last week to those Fellowship meetings we saw advertised.

Mary—They announced at Sunday School that this is Every-Member-Canvass Day, and the pastor urged that each member be at the morning service.

Mrs. Jones—Why didn't you stay, Mary?

Mary—Well, I knew you and father were not coming, and I didn't know what time you would have dinner.

Mr. Jones—I suppose there will be a couple of fellows around here after pledges for the church finance directly. Well, we can't give anything this year. I had to pay \$185 taxes the other day.

Mrs. Jones—I must have a new sealskin coat next week.

Mary—Don't forget that I am expecting Santa Claus to bring me a mahogany bedroom suite.

William—Say, dad, I want one of those bicycles that run without pedaling and a pair of gloves with fur on the back.

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Sarah—I want a new cradle for my dolly.

Mr. Jones—I think the best way to get rid of those canvassers is to hurry up and get away in the machine before they get here, and maybe they won't come back any more.

Mrs. Jones—Well, you children hurry up and get your—(knock is heard). There is some one at the door this very minute; what shall we do?

Mr. Jones—Oh, we will have to invite them in, I suppose, and treat them respectable on account of my business—but remember we *don't* pledge anything.

Mrs. Jones—William, pick up those things of yours. (Goes to the door.) How do you do, Mr. W. How do you do, Mr. M. Will you come in?

Mr. W.—Thank you, Mrs. Jones. (Usual greeting between Mr. Jones and canvassers, but the canvassers are left standing.)

Mr. M.—You have, of course, heard that this is our church's Every-Member-Canvass Day and

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we are the team that was sent to this street. Have you been to our meetings during the past week?

Mrs. Jones—No; we wanted to come so badly, but we have been looking for company all week, and then the children have had colds and we didn't want them to get out in the night air.

William—Say, Sarah, do you remember those soldiers we saw in the movies last Wednesday night? They held their guns like this.

Sarah—They walked straighter than that.

Mrs. Jones (confused)—You children keep still over there. Have you forgotten all your manners?

Mr. W.—Well, we have had a great week. So many good sermons and such a fine spirit. I am sorry you missed all the good things. Our church is planning to do large things this year. We are increasing the size of our missionary budget, with the hope that our church can render the very greatest possible service in this critical time.

Mr. Jones—Well, I am opposed to that. I have heard that it takes 95 cents to send every

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dollar to the mission fields, and then the missionaries get large salaries and have a snap, besides.

Mr. M.—You have been misinformed on those matters, Mr. Jones. The fact is that the financial records show that it takes about 5 cents to send each dollar. Our missionaries on the foreign fields receive a salary of \$600 per year and on the home field less than that. You wouldn't call that a large salary, would you? As to their work being a snap, many of them are returning from their fields entirely broken in health, and I dare say that none of us would be willing to swap jobs with them.

Mr. Jones—Well, that may be.

Mrs. Jones—No, we would like to give something very much, but there have been so many calls recently—the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Liberty Loan, the Belgian Relief, etc., until it has just been calls for money on every hand, and we have decided to economize and shut down on so much giving.

Mr. W.—Do you think, Mrs. Jones, that you should begin to shut down by first refusing to pledge to the Lord's work? Don't you feel that

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the church should do its full duty under present conditions?

Mrs. Jones—Oh, yes, the church should be kept up and it ought to do a great deal more than it does. But I think the church ought to do more charity work right here at home.

Mr. M.—Well, Mrs. Jones, we have a local charity fund on our budget, and some of the money that you pledge today will go to that purpose.

Mrs. Jones—The preacher hasn't called on us for over a year, and I don't think we ought to be asked to pay anything towards his salary.

Mr. W.—We are not out raising money for the preacher, but we are asking for money for the whole task of the Lord's work, and our motto is, "The Whole Church Under the Whole Task." Our pastor has many duties to perform, and it may be that he has not called as often as he should, but we are sure that he wants to minister to all of our members and does his best to do so.

Mr. Jones—Well, how much do you want?

Mr. M.—We are not attempting to tell any one
fourteen

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how much they must give. That is a matter that must be settled between you and your Lord.

Mr. Jones—I suppose we will have to give something. I just bought \$5,000 worth of Liberty Loan bonds and it looks like that ought to be enough for me.

Mr. W.—No, Mr. Jones, you do not *have* to give anything. Our Canvassing Committee has been instructed to receive no gifts unless they are given freely. But, Mr. Jones, do you honestly think that the purchasing of Liberty Loan bonds at 4 per cent. interest, with taxes exempt, should relieve you from supporting your church, which provided religious education for your children and spiritual power for your entire family whenever you are willing to avail yourselves of the opportunity?

Mr. Jones—Mother, I am not so sure but what these men are right. It does look like we ought to support our church above everything else. What do you think about it.

Mrs. Jones—I would certainly hate not to have a Sunday School for the children, and I feel that we ought not longer be indifferent to the call of the church.

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Mr. Jones—Yes, we have been indifferent toward our church for some time, but we must do better in the future. Give me a card and I will make a pledge.

Mr. M.—We are glad to hear you say that, Mr. Jones. We do so much need men of your type in our church work. You can be a great help to us and we are going to count on you. But, Mr. Jones, we want to have a pledge from every member of the church, and we believe it would be better if you would divide up your pledge and let Mrs. Jones, Mary and William all make a pledge, for they are all members of the church. We believe it will be good training for the children.

Mr. Jones—I guess you are right about that, too. Here, Mary, you and William come and sign your cards and I will fill in the amounts, but remember, you must see to it that your amount is taken to the church in the envelopes each Sunday.

Mary and William—Yes, father, we will.

Mr. Jones—Here, mother, you sign your own card, for you have your own spending money.—There, I have made it just as large as I can now. Perhaps I can give more later.

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Mr. M.—Thank you, Mr. Jones. (Proceeds to gather up the cards.)

(Little Sarah is noticed sobbing.)

Mr. Jones—Why, Sarah, what is the matter with you?

Sarah—I want to give something, too.

Mr. Jones—Bless your heart, you shall give something. Here, come climb up on dad's lap and sign your name right here. (Everybody gathers around and comments on Sarah's good writing, etc.)

Mr. W.—Well, we must be going, for we will have to hurry to get around.

Mr. Jones—How many of you fellows are out?

Mr. M.—About thirty of us, and we all report for our various sections at the evening service. Wish you would come out and hear the reports.

Mr. Jones—We will be there *sure*. Good-bye.

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ACT II—(BAD).

CHARACTERS:

Mr. Grouch.

Mrs. Grouch.

Henry Grouch, age 12.

Sally Grouch, age 10.

Canvassers, Mr. W——, Mr. M——.

(As curtain is drawn the family is coming from the dining room.)

Mr. Grouch—Well, I wish you wouldn't burn those pies every Saturday. I certainly do hate to eat burned pies.

Mrs. Grouch—You didn't have to eat them, did you? Tom Grouch, you are always complaining about something. Nothing I do ever seems to suit you.

Sally—Mother, you make Henry quit fooling with my things.

Henry—Oh, I was just trying to find a rag to tie up my finger that I cut with my new knife. Old tattle-tale.

Mrs. Grouch (boxing each one a little)—You children stop your fussing. Your mother has

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something else to do besides watching you kids all the time.

Mr. Grouch—I see here in the paper where they are going around now trying to raise money for the war Y. M. C. A. work. What in the world do the soldiers need with a Y. M. C. A.? They had better be fighting instead of hanging around one of them things. I suppose it is just another scheme to bleed the people for money. It's money, money, money—all the time. I'm gettin' tired of this bein' asked for money.

Mrs. Grouch—I noticed in the local paper where they are out collecting the Red Cross pledges. How much did you subscribe for that, Tom?

Mr. Grouch—Not a single cent.

Mrs. Grouch—Thank goodness for that. I thought maybe we would have to pay so much money out on that pledge that I couldn't get my new player-piano. I hope you didn't buy any Liberty Loan bonds.

Mr. Grouch—Not me. I figure that if this war goes on, money is going to be pretty tight, and I

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calculate to loan some of my money for 12 per cent. before this time next year.

Mrs. Grouch—Well, we haven't got any boys old enough to be taken to the army, anyway, so why should we give anything to those things? (A knock is heard.) Tom, there is some one knocking. Go to the door.

Mr. Grouch—Go to the door yourself. I am busy; and remember, we haven't got any time to entertain company.

Mrs. Grouch—Well, that depends upon who it is. (*Mrs. Grouch* goes to the door and opens slightly and gives cool greeting.)

Mr. W.—*Mrs. Grouch*, we are calling today on all the members of the S— Church and asking them to make a pledge towards the support of the Lord's work for the coming year. Our motto is, "The Whole Church Under the Whole Task," and we are hoping to get a pledge this afternoon from every member of the church. Since yours and *Mr. Grouch*'s names are on our list, we have called to get your pledge.

Mrs. Grouch—No, we won't pledge anything.

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If we have anything to give we will give it when we come to church.

Mr. M.—That is very good, Mrs. Grouch, but you see we have to know something about what the receipts are going to be this year, in order to make plans for our work. If every one of our members would refuse to pledge anything, our church could not do its best work, by any means.

Mrs. Grouch—Well, I won't pledge anything.

Mr. W.—Would you mind telling Mr. Grouch we are here and would like to speak to him about this matter?

Mrs. Grouch—I suppose I can tell him, if that is what you want. (Slams door in face of canvassers and returns to her husband, who is sleeping.) Tom, there are two men at the door wanting you to sign a card to give some money to the church. They wanted me to tell you they are there.

Mr. Grouch—You go back and tell those fellows that I havent' got any money for the church, and, furthermore, I am not going to pledge any. It takes all my loose change these days to buy gasoline and tires.

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Mrs. Grouch—You go tell them yourself.

Mr. Grouch—I'll not do it.

Mrs. Grouch (goes to the door and opens slightly)—Mr. Grouch is very busy just now. He says that after the Red Cross, Liberty Loan and many other calls he will not pledge anything.

Mr. W.—I suppose he counts himself a member of the church, does he not?

Mrs. Grouch—I don't know; I'll go ask him. (Slams door again.) Say, those fellows want to know if you count yourself a member of the church.

Mr. Grouch (indignant)—Me a member of the church? Of course, I am a member. How would my obituary sound without the statement that I was a member of the church?

Mrs. Grouch (returning to the door)—He says "yes," he wants to be counted a member.

Mr. M.—Well, good-day, Mrs. Grouch. We are very sorry to have to report that two members in our district refused to give anything at all.

Mrs. Grouch (sarcastically)—Good-day.

CURTAIN.

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SUPPLEMENT TO ACT II—(VERY BAD).

CHARACTERS:

Mr. Smith.

Mrs. Smith.

Jane Smith, age 11.

Canvassers, Mr. W——, Mr. M——.

(Curtains are drawn; family is seated in the room reading. A rap is heard at the door. Mrs. Smith starts to the door, turns and comes back to her husband quickly.)

Mrs. Smith—Say, this is the day the church is making its Every-Member-Canvass, and I'll bet that is the team at the door now.

Mr. Smith—Do you reckon? Keep still.

Mrs. Smith—Jane, you tiptoe to the dining room window and see who is at the door.

Jane (returning from the dining room)—It's Mr. W. and Mr. M.

Mr. Smith—That is the team, sure. What will we do?

Mrs. Smith—Come here, quick. (Mrs. Smith takes the whole family and hides behind the

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piano. The canvassers keep knocking louder than ever. Jane starts to go look through the keyhole, but mother runs after her and pulls her back.)

Mr. —— (on the outside)—I was almost sure I heard some one a minute ago.

Mr. W.—Nobody home.

CURTAIN.

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ACT III—(GOOD).

CHARACTERS:

Mr. Lovejoy.

Mrs. Lovejoy.

Ernest Lovejoy, age 20, tenor.

Josephine Lovejoy, age 18, pianist.

Sarah Lovejoy, age 16, alto.

Edith Lovejoy, age 15, soprano.

Babe Lovejoy, age 6.

Canvassers, Mr. W—, Mr. M—.

(As the curtain is drawn the family strolls in from the dining room.)

Mr. Lov. (coughs and picks up book off of table.)

Ernest—What's the matter, father? Are you taking cold?

Mr. Lov.—No, just a little tickling in my throat.

Mrs. Lov.—Never mind the dinner dishes just now, girls. Let's all come in the sitting room and rest awhile.

Mr. Lov.—I think we will need a rest after that good dinner, mother. Especially you, Ernie.

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Ernest—Well, now, Dad, you haven't got much room to talk when it comes to this eating proposition.

Edith—No, but he always has plenty of room to eat.

Mrs. Lov.—Now, now, children, don't be too hard on your father. He's very bashful, you know. (Laughter.)

Ernest (as Josephine enters)—Well, Sis, there is nothing left for you but the piano stool, and I guess that is your place, anyway.

Josephine—Well, what shall it be (runs fingers over the keys).

Edith—Oh, something we can sing.

Josephine—Well, come and pick it out, then.

Edith (goes to the piano)—Here, try this. Come on, Sarah; don't keep your nose in that magazine all afternoon. Let's try this song.

(Edith and Sarah sing some good duet.)

Sarah—Brother, your dinner ought to be settled by this time so you could come and help us. Come on.

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Ernest—I am not so sure about that. You know it takes a good while for my dinner to settle; but I will try. But say, Dad, we will need a little help on the bass.

Josephine—Yes, come on, father; you are the best singer in the bunch, anyway.

Mr. Lov.—Thank you, daughter. I feel just as young as any of you today, when I see my little family all about me. (A short discussion as to what they should sing, and then some song is agreed upon and a quartette follows.)

Ernest—Now, mother, you and babe will have to give us a duet.

Mrs. Lov.—Mother will resign in favor of babe. Go on, babe, and sing your song. (Other members of the family say, "Yes, go on, babe," etc.)

Babe (sings verses of "Home, Sweet Home," and the family join in the chorus.)

(Note.—This scene can be made much prettier if red lights can be arranged as a fireplace effect and all other lights turned off during the chorus.)

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Ernest—Now isn't it about time for me to get out the car and take us all for a little drive?

Mr. Lov.—No, son, we can't go yet. Don't you remember, this is the afternoon of the Every-Member Canvass and we must be here to welcome our guests when they come. Have you children all made up your minds how much you are going to subscribe this year to the great work our church is going to do?

Mrs. Lov.—Yes, father, we must talk that matter all over before the men come, so we won't keep them waiting long on us. Remember, our pastor is anxious that we all do our very best.

Ernest—Well, Dad, you won't have to make my pledge this year. I am thankful that I am making my own money now and can give to the Lord's work out of what I earn.

Josephine—Isn't it fine I have my music class complete? You know I am going to take our pastor's suggestion of the Bible way and I am going to give a tithe.

Edith (seated on the arm of father's chair)—Daddy, I wish I was making some money for myself.

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Mr. Lov.—Never mind, daughter, you and Sarah must get your education first; but you generally have some change, don't you? Can't you save a little out of that each week? These are days, you know, when we will have to eat a little less candy and take in fewer picture shows, in order that the larger tasks may be accomplished.

Sarah—I am willing to cut down the candy bill.

Edith—And I am willing to cut out some of the shows.

Mr. Lov.—You girls just decide what you want to pledge and sign up for that amount. Mother, you and I will have to have our amounts ready.

Mrs. Lov.—Yes, father, I am going to cut down expenses on some other things and give just a little more this year to help on that war emergency fund our pastor spoke of.

Mr. Lov.—There is the door bell now. I suspect that is our guests. (Goes to the door.) Come right in, gentlemen. We are all glad to see you. We have been waiting on you and looking forward to your visit. Take these chairs here and warm yourselves a bit. (A cordial greeting

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from all the family and canvassers are given best chairs in the room.)

Mrs. Lov.—We were just wondering what team we would have on this street. We are so glad we made such a good draw.

Mr. W.—Mrs. Lovejoy, I think we are the fortunate ones. We have been treated so kindly everywhere we have been.

Mr. M.—With one exception.

Mr. W.—Well, we won't talk about that now. We are in just a little hurry, Mr. Lovejoy, as much as we like this good fire and your gracious hospitality. Since you know our mission, if you are ready to sign our cards, we will get to business at once.

Mr. Lov.—All right, we are all ready. Children, come and get your cards and sign up.
(Signing.)

Mr. M.—Does babe want a card, too.

Babe—Yes, sir, I give a penny every Sunday.

Mr. M.—That's good. Here is a card for you.

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Mr. W. (gathering up cards)—Well, that is quick work. If every place was like this we would soon be around.

Mr. Lov.—How many more places have you got to go yet?

Mr. M.—Quite a number, and some are away over on another street.

Ernest—Say, Dad, I would like to help out some way. What do you say, I go get the car and take these men around the rest of the afternoon?

Mr. Lov.—That is a fine suggestion, Ernest, if the whole family will agree to give up that drive this afternoon. All in favor say “Aye.”

All—“Aye.”

Mr. W.—That is mighty fine of you, Ernest. We will meet you out in front. Good-bye to you all.

Everybody—Good-bye.

CURTAIN.

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Note.—While the audience is still cheering, the curtains are again drawn and the pianist strikes up “America.” The entire caste quickly take their places on the platform, the children in front, etc. Every one sings “America,” closing with “God save our noble men.” While this last verse is being sung the flag is waved by Mr. M.

To Be Sung with “America”

God save our noble men,
Bring them safe home again,
 God save our men.
Keep them victorious,
Patient and chivalrous,
They are so dear to us,
 God save our men.

BENEDICTION.

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